

and stockyards from attack which was liable to occur at any time.”¹⁹

Large companies of Forty-Niners were now pouring through the territory. Their coming was both a blessing and a detriment. Their purchases brought much-needed cash into the settlement, but the trading of guns and ammunition to the Indians for horses was disquieting. Although the presence of a large number of well-armed emigrants had its effect upon the Indians, an epidemic of measles that broke out among them had more to do with their apparent peacefulness. The militia drilled daily, and the roar of the six-pounder punctuated the stillness to remind the Indians that the fort was well protected.²⁰

Brigham Young, on his way to visit the fort, left Great Salt Lake City September 14, 1849. “We descended to the Utah Valley in a diagonal line,” writes Thomas Bullock, “and soon reached Dry Creek [site of Lehi] which was fringed with willows and small trees. We continued on to the American creek, along the banks of which stream many traveling California emigrants were scattered. . . . At length we came in sight of the grove, in which lies the Fort, when the old pioneer gun belched forth our introduction to the Fort. The brethren were collecting their cattle for the night when we arrived. On crossing the island, we saw some very beautiful timber. We then crossed the Provo river, a fine stream, five rods wide and from 16 to 20 inches deep. On reaching the opposite bank, we were met by all the inhabitants at 20 minutes to 4 o’clock at the gate of the Fort. We drove inside and were hospitably welcomed by the people. In the Fort was raised a platform, on which the cannon was placed; under the platform 4 tables covered with good things of the earth, were built. We who had just arrived sat down to three tables and partook to our satisfaction. The visiting brethren were scattered in different houses for the night.”²¹

V

SECOND FORT UTAH—“A VERY
ELIGIBLE PLACE”

1850

BRIGHAM YOUNG, Heber C. Kimball, and others rode out on September 17 to locate a more suitable town-site. The original fort had been selected because the Provo River and a small stream flowing southward afforded protection from the swarms of “Mormon crickets” that infested the northern benchlands. The annual spring flooding of the Provo River, however, inundated the grain fields.¹ Brigham Young “found a very eligible place, about 2 miles southeast of the Fort, where it was decided to build a city a mile square to be laid off in blocks of four acres each, divided into eight lots of half an acre each, reserving the center block of four acres for a chapel and school-house; the streets to be five rods wide.”²

Although the California emigrants had enriched the colony to some extent, poverty was still their bedfellow. Oliver B. Huntington tells of one elder called from the congregation to speak “who had on neither coat, shoes or socks, and he spoke with much power of the Holy Spirit. . . . We felt it no shame because it was the best we could do. . . . I went to dances in private houses where there was no floor but the ground, and no splendor but bright, cheerful, honest faces. . . . We needed no money then to pay extravagant fiddlers’ ‘bills’. . . . We could pay for our admission to a party in wheat, flour, oats, corn, potatoes, squashes, molasses, beets or anything the people

wanted to eat or wear. . . . In those days we all 'met on a level and parted on the square'. . . . We never heard of burglaries, hold-ups, or suicides. We never had heard or thought of bankruptcy or gambling in stocks. The present hard times are more in the imagination than reality."³

Despite increasing Indian hostility, the colony grew rapidly. John Porter and Alexander Williams erected a sawmill; Abram G. Conover threshed the first wheat, which "was a cause of rejoicing by the colonists, as they had been out of bread for about four months"; while James Bean and the Clarks tapped the Provo River, and dug the first irrigation ditch, later known as Beanditch.⁴ Samuel Clark built the first tannery and commenced tanning hides for shoes. The need for shoes was so great that most of the leather was used before it was properly tanned.

The Indians became increasingly difficult. Isaac Higbee advised Brigham Young on October 15 that the Indians had shot at several of the settlers, killed two animals, and stolen some corn. Three of the Utes, two of them naked and unarmed, and one of them carrying a stick with feathers tied to it, advanced and met the brethren outside the fort. They had heard the brethren were angry with them, and they had come to make peace. Peace was made, but the Indians still persisted in stealing, and were very saucy, threatening to kill the men and take the women.⁵ "They called us old women and cowards," Peter Conover noted in his journal, "and [said] that we were afraid to fight them."⁶

Young's reply on the 18th could not be called sympathetic. He ordered the settlers to take care of their grain, stockade their fort, and attend to their own affairs. "Let your women and children stay in the fort, and the Indians stay out, but, while you mix with them promiscuously, you must continue to receive such treatment. . . . This is what

we have told you continually, and you will find it true. . . . Let any man, or company of men be familiar with Indians, and they will be more familiar; and the more familiar, you will find the less influence you will have with them. If you would have dominion over them, for your own good, which is the duty of the Elders, you must not treat them as your equals. . . . If they are your equals, you cannot raise them up to you. You have been too familiar with them; your children have mixed promiscuously with them; they have been free in your houses, and some of the brethren have spent too much time in smoking and chatting with them; instead of teaching them to labor, such a course has encouraged them in idleness and ignorance, the effect of which you begin to feel. You must now rid yourselves of these evils the best way you can, by righting up everything and doing . . . probably what you would have done at first, if multiplied cares had not rested upon you, as is common in all new settlements. . . . You had better finish your fort, bring all your grain into it, and continue to live in it at present. And when the town is laid out, build thereon, as you have the means and the way shall be open."⁷

When Parley P. Pratt passed through the settlement on November 27, 1849, on his way to explore southern Utah, he found "57 log houses built on 17½ acres of ground, 100 rods from the Provo River," proof that "the means and the way" were "opening" to the colonists.⁸

By January 9, 1850, the settlers were fed up with the Indians. Alexander Williams and others advised Brigham Young that besides stealing cattle the Indians were threatening war. Young thought there was no necessity for fighting with the Indians, and warned if they killed Indians for stealing, they should have to answer for it. "Why," he demanded, "should men have a disposition to kill a destitute, naked Indian, who may steal a shirt or

a horse and thinks it no harm, when they never think of meting out a like retribution to a white man who steals, although he has been taught better from infancy?"⁹

This was cold comfort to the settlers, who were alarmed by Brigham's apparent indifference to their predicament. Isaac Higbee on January 31 sent Miles Weaver and Peter W. Conover by express to Great Salt Lake City, to place the case before Brigham Young. The forty-mile trip was made in four hours. Darkly they painted the picture, asking permission to chastise the Indians. Young finally gave way.¹⁰

Captain Howard Stansbury, U. S. Topographical Engineer, in Great Salt Lake City for the winter, no doubt had some influence upon Young's decision. Stansbury felt that his survey would have to be postponed unless the Ute and Paiute Indians were put in their place. He reported to the Government:

While engaged in the survey of Utah Valley we were no little annoyed by numbers of the [Paiute] tribe, who hung around camp, crowding around the cook-fires, more like hungry dogs than human beings, eagerly watching for the least scrap that might be thrown away, which they devoured with avidity and without the least preparation. The herdsmen also complained that their cattle were frequently scattered, and that notwithstanding their utmost vigilance, several of them had unaccountably disappeared and were lost. One morning, a fine fat ox came into camp with an arrow buried in his side, which perfectly accounted for the disappearance of the others.

After the party left Lake Utah for winter quarters in Salt Lake City, the Indians became more insolent, boasting of what they had done—driving off the stock of the inhabitants of the southern settlements, resisting all attempts to recover them, and finally firing upon the people themselves as they issued from their little stockade to attend to their ordinary occupations. Under these circumstances, the settlers in Utah Valley applied to the supreme government, at Salt Lake City, for counsel as to the proper course of action. The President was at first extremely averse to the adoption of harsh meas-

ures; but, after several conciliatory overtures had been resorted to in vain, he very properly determined to put a stop, by force, to further aggressions, which, if not resisted, could only end in the total destruction of the colony. . . . Before coming to this decision, the authorities called upon me to consult as to the policy of the measure, and to request the expression of my opinion as to what view the Government of the United States might be expected to take of it. . . . I did not hesitate to tell them that . . . the contemplated expedition against these savage marauders was a measure not only of good policy, but one of absolute necessity and self preservation. . . . I was convinced that the completion of the yet unfinished survey of Utah Valley . . . must otherwise be attended with serious difficulty, if not actual hazard, and would involve the necessity of a largely increased and armed escort for its protection.¹¹

On February 2, Brigham Young announced his decision to subdue the Indians in Utah Valley. His remarks were endorsed by Captain Stansbury. Gen. Daniel H. Wells then called out the volunteers.¹² The following day George D. Grant gathered the first company of volunteers at the Bowery. Stansbury wrote Young: "Understanding that your expedition against the Utah Indians is about to start today, I am anxious that you should have the use of everything I have, that may be of advantage to its successful issue. I have already furnished all the arms I have, together with such other things as Captain Grant thought he should want. Should there be anything else which at this late hour may occur to you, I hope you will not hesitate to apply to me for it, and should it be in my power, it shall be at your disposal. I wish particularly to say, that the services of Dr. Blake and Lieut. Howland are to be entirely without compensation, they being under pay of the Government, and I hope that they may prove serviceable to the campaign."¹³

Marching all night, the militia arrived at the post sometime after midnight February 8. The company had suffered severely from the freezing cold and snow. The

Indians, unaware of the reinforcements, killed four head of cattle belonging to Captain Hunt.

One band of Indians, headed by Ankatorwats [Tullidge spells the name Antonguer, G. W. Bean, Angatewats], continued friendly. The old chief came to the fort asking peace in return for aid. "We thought we had better bring them into the fort so they could not telegraph movements to the other Indians," said Peter Conover. "I took ten men and went over before sunrise and brought them into the Fort."¹⁴

Grant's company, reinforced by the militia under Captain Conover, started after the Indians on the 9th of February. They were found fortified in the bend of the river, hiding behind the bank, with rude bulwarks of cottonwood timber. They also occupied a log house built by James Bean, who had abandoned it because of the Indians.

The Utes were commanded by Big Elk, a brave and resourceful Indian. His superior, Ope-Carry or Stick-on-Head, was more peaceful. There were about seventy well-armed warriors in the camp. Dimick B. Huntington, the interpreter, called for a pow-wow. Ope-Carry came out and expressed a desire for peace, but while the parley was in progress, Big Elk opened fire. The whites fired back.

At the end of the first day, the Indians courageously still held their position. Artillery was ineffective because of the hidden position of the Utes. The red men would make sudden sorties, and, after firing, run for cover. They would also raise their heads long enough to take aim and fire at the whites, but it was their log-house force that was most effective. At the close of the first day's battle, there were several white men wounded and one known Indian, an observer posted in a tree. Suffering from the cold, the weary militia returned to the fort after dark.

The battle was resumed next morning without much success for the besiegers. In the afternoon, the attacking

force determined to take the log house at all costs. Lieutenant William H. Kimball, with fifteen men, was dispatched up the river to maneuver into a position facing the back of the house. This side of the house was not provided with windows or doors, but was full of chink holes through which the rifles of the Indians protruded. At the command to charge, every man dashed forward along the bottom of the creek. In endeavoring to cross the ice, the cavalry broke through and for a few minutes were hidden from sight. When they came back into view a few rods from the house, a huge volley of fire welcomed them from the chinks. R. T. Burton and Lot Smith succeeded in riding their horses around the corners and into a passageway between the rooms of the house. Seven or eight horses were shot down in the charge, but no other injuries were suffered. Between the firing, Kimball and others gained the shelter of the house.

The infantry, under Conover, were now ordered forward to support the charge, carrying a saw and an ax to cut an entrance into the rear of the house. A few, however, entered from the front, and drew the fire of the Indians. One of these, Jabez Nowlan, was shot in the nose—he had, says Abner Blackburn, "a verry large nose his wife told him in the morning if he was shot it would be in his nose, and sure enough he was." At the suggestion of Lieutenant Howland, a movable V-shaped barricade of planks was constructed, on runners. The outside was screened with brush, while the inside was hung loosely with buffalo robes and blankets to stop the force of the bullets should they penetrate the timbers. This strange object was pushed toward the Indians, who took alarm and retreated that evening, quietly taking with them a supply of horse meat cut from the slain animals.

Investigation the following day revealed two or three warriors either dead or dying, and one squaw dead. The

attackers had lost one man, Joseph Higbee, son of Isaac Higbee, and had eighteen wounded. Big Elk, who had sworn never to live in peace with the white men, died on the way to Rock Canyon, to which part of his force had fled.

The main body of Indians turned south to Spanish Fork Canyon, followed by General Wells, sent to take charge of further operations. Brief engagements occurred at Spanish Fork and Peteetneet (Payson), and the band was overtaken near Table Mountain at the south end of Utah Lake. Here five Indians were killed in battle and seventeen prisoners taken. The next morning the prisoners regained their arms and fled across the lake on the slippery ice, with the whites in pursuit. When shot at, they would fall as if dead, but when the militia came closer, would rise and fire. All of these Indians were killed. The whites lost some horses.

The Indians who fled up Rock Canyon were pursued by a force of men under Captain (Andrew L.?) Lamoreaux and Major Andrew Lytle. After a skirmish the Indians escaped.

Soon after these battles, campfires were seen near Table Mountain at night. Twenty-three young men from the fort investigated and found a band of about the same number of warriors. They were hostile but finally smoked the pipe of peace. All started for the fort, where a large ox was given to the Indians, sealing the peace.¹⁵

"I was a young girl at the time it happened," Epsy Jane Williams Pace writes in her autobiography, "I nursed and took care of the wounded and cooked for 18 of the Cottonwood Company at home besides our own family and then after nine p. m. I went to the Bishop's and cooked for William H. Kimball and his company of 25 also the Bishop's family the night Jos. Higby was killed."¹⁶

The campaign had lasted three weeks; the 97 prisoners

taken were young bucks, squaws, and children, most of whom returned to their tribes after the treaty. Stansbury's surgeon, Dr. Blake, "cut the heads off the Indians that were killed and brought them to the fort. He had 40 or 50," Epsy Jane Williams Pace says, "and said that after the flesh was off he was going to take them back to Washington."¹⁷

Abner Blackburn gives a lively picture of this venture in headhunting:

a few days after the last batle with the indians a government surgeon wanted James Or and me to take a slei cross over on the ice and secure the indians heads for he wanted to send them to Washington to a medical institution. hired a slei crost over on the ice the weather was bitter cold. the surgeon tok out his box of instruments and comenced it took him a quarter of an hour to cut of one head. the sun was getting low and frezing cold Jim and me took the job in our own hands we wear not going to wait on the surgeons slow motion jerked our knives out and had them all of in a few minutes.

they wear frozen and come of easy in our fassion the surgeon stood back and watched us finish the job the surgeon shot some ducks ten or twelve boxed them up guts feathers and all. and told me to bring them down with the indian heads in a week or two to Salt Lake City. took them down according to agreement the weather turned warm and the ducks wear green with rot. the indian heads smelt loud drove to his office. and told him the ducks wear spoilt he opened the box pulled out a wing smelt it and says they are just right. He settled up and invited me to super. i was not hungry and declined his offer¹⁸

The settlers set about construction of a small fort, six by twelve rods, at what is now Sowiette Park. The old fort was subject to floods every spring and was too small to accommodate the growing population. Still another and larger fort was surveyed in March, 1850. The large fort, selected by Brigham Young above the flood line of the river, was to be laid off eleven blocks square, "each block to contain 12 lots of 12 rods by four, the streets to be 5

rods wide and the center block to be reserved by the chapel, schools, etc."¹⁹ William M. Lemon surveyed the plot on March 25. Higbee and Smith erected a gristmill, and the Turner and East Union ditches brought water from the Provo River to the farmlands. Settlers, meantime, were coming through the valley on their way to new settlements in the south.

Certain of the Indians were still smarting under defeat. Walker and Arrapene were reported punishing Indians who persisted in killing the cattle of the settlers, and Walker informed Isaac Morley in Sanpete Valley that Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez were urging the Indians to make war upon the Mormons. Pat Sowiette continued raiding the settlers, and Morley reported the theft of ten head of cattle. On April 21, Morley again wrote Brigham Young, "We have just heard by two Utah Indians . . . that Pat Sowiette has been over in Salt Lake Valley and killed six cattle, two mules and two horses, and threatened to kill all they can find of the Mormons by laying around nights, or at any time, when found alone. . . . If Walker or others make peace with the Mormons, they say, they are women. Walker says that he wishes the Mormons to go and take Pat-Sow-e-ett, Un-ker-wen-kent, and Tish-u-nah and put them out of the way, so that he and others may be at rest and peace and be able to lay down and sleep good. Walker says that the Utes under Sow-e-ett are coming here this season and wishes to have the trade come here, so that they need not travel among the hostile Indians in the Utah Valley. They want cattle, blankets, hats, knives, guns, and ammunition, and all kinds of articles for Indian trade. The brethren at Utah Fort are hereby requested to be on their guard, as these hostile Indians threaten to kill the Mormons. . . . The nights are the time for such to operate. . . . Walker seems bent on exposing every plot and contrivance laid against the Mor-

mons as fast as it comes to his knowledge. . . . This was written and sent by request of Walker."²⁰

Residents of Provo evidently heeded the warning, because, on April 28, General Daniel H. Wells was advised that they had killed the brother of Pat Sowiette and desired to know if that chief was in the vicinity of Salt Lake City. Plans were laid for Wells to come to Provo for a meeting with the Indians and enact a trade treaty. Shortly before noon of May 20 he started with Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Thomas Bullock, Brigham H. Young, and others. Before their arrival at Provo they were met by Elijah (Barney) Ward and Grosepene with word that the Indians were anxious to receive the party; some of them had come all the way from Mexico for that purpose. Young directed Newel K. Whitney to forward 2,500 pounds of flour, meat, and other provisions, all the hats and caps that could be obtained, and a quantity of ammunition.²¹

The next day Ward and Grosepene rode on ahead to inform the colony of the approaching party, and to see that wagons were sent to meet the teams loaded with provisions. Provo River was booming with high water, and the company encamped on the north side of the slough. Several Indians came to the President's camp for breakfast. At nightfall the Indians made a circle singing and dancing while another company sat around the fire gambling. Presently they formed into a semi-circle and went singing up to the fort, "and in this manner they gave the President's party a serenading."²²

The inevitable horse races took place the morning of May 23. Bets were placed, usually a shirt against a buckskin, or a coat or pants against an elk's hide. The Mormons won the race, and the Indians paid off. In the afternoon Young gave orders to George D. Grant, Lewis Robinson, Ephraim Hanks, and Hiram B. Clawson to start